

Emergency Medical Services Personnel Utilize Trauma Training to Save Lives

Issue

Joe Barr, Captain of the Williamston EMS Squad, has witnessed unimaginable scenes of bloodshed on the very dangerous Interstate-85 corridor that goes through Anderson County in the upstate of South Carolina. Thirty-six persons have been killed in traffic crashes in Anderson County as of October 1, 2006.

Seven hundred and fifty-seven people have lost their lives on the state's highways as of October 1, 2006. South Carolina drivers had 108,886 traffic accidents in 2003 with an economic loss of over \$2.3 billion dollars.

Intervention

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Division of EMS and Trauma, is working to reduce deaths and injuries in South Carolina due to highway trauma. Utilizing the \$179,000 PHHS Block Grant funds allocated for EMS, the Division has aggressively inspected ambulances throughout the state for compliance with equipment standards and has sponsored trauma training throughout the state.

Some notable achievements during the Block Grant period were:

- To insure that the state's EMS fleet was equipped to manage traumatic injuries, the Division inspected 489 ambulance vehicles and examined treatment protocols for 149 ambulance services to insure compliance with approved trauma treatment protocols.
- Five hundred and seventeen EMS personnel were provided trauma training in a wide variety of trauma specific courses during the Block Grant period. The courses included Intermediate-EMT and Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) courses.

Impact

Joe Barr is understandably proud of the prowess of his squad members. Their trauma skills were put to the test in an all too common scenario when a large truck struck a young lady on a secondary road in Anderson County. The patient was entrapped in her heavily damaged vehicle. The initial assessment revealed that she was unresponsive, had a compromised airway, and a revised trauma score of six, a score that made her a "trauma alert." While extrication personnel gained access to her vehicle, EMS personnel secured the airway and initiated an intravenous line via a bone-injection device. The personnel on the scene quickly realized that a helicopter was needed and the call was made. She was transported to a trauma center and recovered after numerous surgeries. She has returned to Williamston EMS to thank those responsible for her rescue.

Contact

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